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A GLIMPSE OF GRAMMAR-LAND

M. FRANCES BROWN

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SYRACUSE, N. Y.
C. W. BARDEEN, PUBLISHER
1894

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C. W. BARDEEN, Publisher, Syracuse, N. Y.

A GLIMPSE

OF

GRAMMARLAND

A FARCE

BY

M. FRANCES BROWN

INTERLEAVED, FOR NOTES AND STAGE DIRECTIONS

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Characters

Judge Grammar,	Mr. Noun,	Madam Verb,
Sergeant Parsing,	Miss Pronoun,	Ad Verb,
Dr. Syntax,	Miss Adjective,	Preposition,
Nine parts of speech,	Ragged little Article,	Conjunction,

Tiresome Interjection.

Note.—Characters may be costumed in many different ways. For instance, Judge Grammar wears gown and wig. Adjective and Pronoun have name on belt or sash. Noun wears breast-plate with name in gilt upon it. Preposition carries shield with word divided into Pre-position. Sergeant Parsing wears zouave suit and is very military throughout. Pantomime of characters continues during the speaking of individual lines. Interjection wears a cap made of wire and covered with white tissue paper in such a manner as to represent an exclamation point, with the head for a period. Article is dressed in rags and his name is put on his back in crooked straggling letters. Madam Verb represents a fussy, bustling woman, with two curls on each side of the face, carries a large fan, and scorns Ad Verb, who fawns upon her constantly.

A GLIMPSE OF GRAMMARLAND—A FARCE

A court scene. Judge Grammar and Dr. Syntax seated at a table on platform.

JUDGE GRAMMAR (*wakened from a comfortable nap, growls out*) —Brother Parsing, Dr. Syntax, Here!

Brother Parsing, this racket must be stopped. What are they fighting about? I divided the words clearly enough once among the nine parts of speech. Why cannot they keep the peace?

SERGEANT PARSING.—My Lord, the fact is that it is a long time since you portioned out the words, and the Parts of Speech since then have been left to do pretty much as they like. Some of them are greedy, and have stolen their neighbor's words. Some of them have obtained new words which the others say they had no right to make, and some of them are even inclined to think that Dr. Syntax is old-fashioned and need not be obeyed. In fact, unless your lordship takes the matter in hand at once, I am afraid the good old laws of Grammar-land will all go to wreck and ruin.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—That must never be; that must *never* be. We must stop it at once. Go and summon all my court before me.

(*Acting of various parts of speech, who come in and quarrel with each other in pantomime. Mr. Noun, with little Article close behind, comes to front of stage, and Sergeant Parsing grabs Noun by the coat collar.*

SERGEANT PARSING.—What is your name?

MR. NOUN.—Name.

SERGEANT PARSING.—Yes, your name.

MR. NOUN.—Name.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Do not trifle, sir,—what is your name? Answer at once, and truly.

MR. NOUN.—I have answered truly. My name is "Name", for *noun* means *name*. The name of everything belongs to me, so I am called Mr. Name, or Mr. Noun, which means the same thing, and my words are all nouns.

SERGEANT PARSING.—Well, if you have the name of everything we can see, touch, taste, smell, hear, or think about, all I can say is I hope you are satisfied, and do not claim any more words besides.

MR. NOUN.—Yes, sir, the house, the bird, a book, an apple, my goodness, his badness, these people, *that* wig (*pointing to Judge Grammar's wig.*)

SERGEANT PARSING.—What is the matter? Who dares to interrupt the court?

(*Article and Adjective and Pronoun come pushing forward, crying, and fighting, while Judge Grammar tries to quiet the confusion.*)

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Bring them up before me. What is the matter, sir? Who are you? (*Turning to Article.*)

ARTICLE (*in tearful voice*).—My name is Article or Little Joint. I have only two words in all Grammar-land—*a* and *the*, and I lend them to Mr. Noun whenever he asks for them fairly, but, your lordship, it is very hard (boo-hoo) that they should be claimed as they were just now, as if they belonged to Mr. Noun, when he is so rich, and I am so very, very poor.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Is it true, Brother Parsing, that little Article is always ready to wait upon Mr. Noun ?

SERGEANT PARSING.—Quite true, my lord. Indeed, I have often been able to discover Mr. Noun by catching sight of little Article running on before him, for wherever you see an *a* or *an* or *the* you may be sure that Mr. Noun will have a word of his own in somewhere near.

MR. NOUN.—I cannot see that little Article is of much use to me at any time, but he has an old habit of coming with me wherever I go, and when I have no one else I don't mind having him.

SERGEANT PARSING.—I have one question to ask. This little Article said that he has only two words in all Grammar-land—*a*, and *the*. I wish to ask him what he says to *an*; as you say an egg, apple. Surely *an* belongs to him also.

(ARTICLE *trembles and looks around in distress at everything about him, while* PRONOUN *breaks in by singing—to the tune of Auld Lang Syne:*)

Tom took Maria on the ice;
It broke, and she fell in;
He got a rope and in a trice
He pulled her out again.
If they had both been drowned, you know,
If they had both been drowned,
Folks would have said, "I told you so",
If they had both been drowned.

SERGEANT PARSING.—Here, here. What is all this confusion ?

PRONOUN (*to herself.*—There *it* stands for *ice* and *she* for *Maria*, and *he* for *Tom* and *they* for *Tom* and *Maria* together; and in speaking to him (*pointing at the Judge*) I'll say your wig, and not Judge Grammar's wig.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—You need not say anything about my wig. Mind your own words, and tell us what others you have.

(*Here* MISS ADJECTIVE *and* MR. NOUN *both attack* MISS PRONOUN *saying excitedly.*) It is mine! I know it is! I'll ask the Judge if it is not!

PRONOUN.—I'll ask him too. My lord, *her* is mine, and Adjective wants to take it from me. But when I claimed it in court before, she said nothing.

ADJECTIVE.—I thought the more—but I suppose you would give it up quietly, without all this fuss.

PRONOUN.—I would if it were yours—but it is not.

ADJECTIVE.—It is. I tell you it is!

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Silence! Brother Parsing, be kind enough to question both Adjective and Pronoun, that we may know the cause of the quarrel, and hear what each has to say for himself.

SERGEANT PARSING.—Certainly, my lord. Adjective, what word do you claim?

ADJECTIVE.—*My, thy, his, her, its, our, your, their,* etc.

SERGEANT PARSING.—Well, Miss Pronoun, tell how you make them out to be yours.

PRONOUN.—Nothing is easier. These words stand instead of nouns, and therefore, they must be pronouns. When you say "my thumb", my lord, you mean Judge Grammar's thumb, so *my* stands instead of the noun, Judge Grammar. And when you say "Little Bo-peep has lost her sheep," you mean Little Bo-peep's sheep, therefore *her* stands instead of Little Bo-peep. So all of such words are clearly pronouns, and are used in just the same way and therefore *must* be pronouns, too.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—It would seem so. But it is all very well to say *must,* and Miss Pronoun says they *must* be hers.

PRONOUN.—My lord, she claims all the words of mine that are used before a noun. *This, that, these, those,* for instance.

ADJECTIVE.—Of course I do, for when you say "this bird, that horse, these rabbits, those people", *this, that, these,* and *those* are clearly used *with* a noun, not *of* one.

PRONOUN.—Ah! but when you say "Look at this," "Take that," "May I have these?" "Burn those!" are they then used with a noun?

JUDGE GRAMMAR (*to himself*).—It seems to me that sometimes they are adjectives and sometimes pronouns.

ADJECTIVE.—That is just what I say, my lord, and if you will allow it, I think I know of a way that will make peace between us directly. Let us call them Adjective-Pronouns, and have them between us.

(ADJECTIVE AND PRONOUN *recite together, coming to front of platform.*)

Two sparrows had a fight to-day,
Each sparrow with a worm did play.
One pulled at it, so did his brother,
Neither bird would yield to the other.
Had either given up, at least
His brother would have had the feast;
But while they fought, a thrush came by,
And with the worm away did fly.

PRONOUN.—Well, *who* is altogether mine, for you cannot say "who way", "who book", "who man", or anything of that sort.

INTERJECTION (*running about among them*)—Hoo! hoo! hoo! ha! ha! ha! he! he! he! Old Adjective beaten! hurrah! bravo!

SERGEANT PARSING.—It is Interjection (*diving after him into the crowd*).

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Critic, seize that fellow and bring him here.

(*Acting on the part of Interjection. He is finally caught and qrought forward, when the Judge says sternly*) Interjection, you are the last of the Parts of Speech and have no business to interrupt the court now. Let me not hear you again till your turn comes.

INTERJECTION.—Alas! Alas! Mr. Parsing says I am only a poor

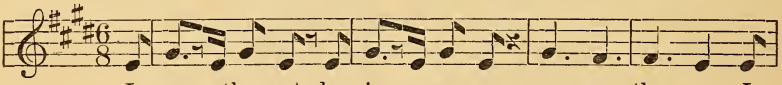
little fellow thrown in (that is what my name means) to express surprise or fear, joy or sorrow. When folks do not know what to say next, one of my little words pops in, and poor Mr. Parsing is at his wits' end to know what to do with it. Ah ! Ah ! Off ! Off ! Away ! Away !—ha ! ha ! ha !"

(*Here Madam Verb comes bustling up and says :*)

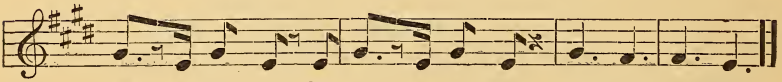
MADAM VERB.—My lord, my name is Verb. I am called Verb because verb means word, and the verb is the most important word —*the* word in fact, in every sentence. May I show you some things that I can do, Judge Grammar ? I should like to sing a short collection of my choice verses to you. Pronoun will you kindly assist me a few minutes ?

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Sing ? I did not know that you could sing Madam Verb, but let us hear you sing by all means."

MADAM VERB.—(Drawls the following words to the air given.)



I am, thou art, he is, we are; you are, they are. I



was, thou wast, he was, we were; you were, they were.

(*Every one bursts out laughing.*)

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—And you call that singing, do you, Madam Verb ?

MADAM VERB.—Dr. Syntax there calls it conjugating, I believe, but I think *singing* is a prettier and easier name for it.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—But it is not a song at all,—there is no tune to it, and no rhyme.

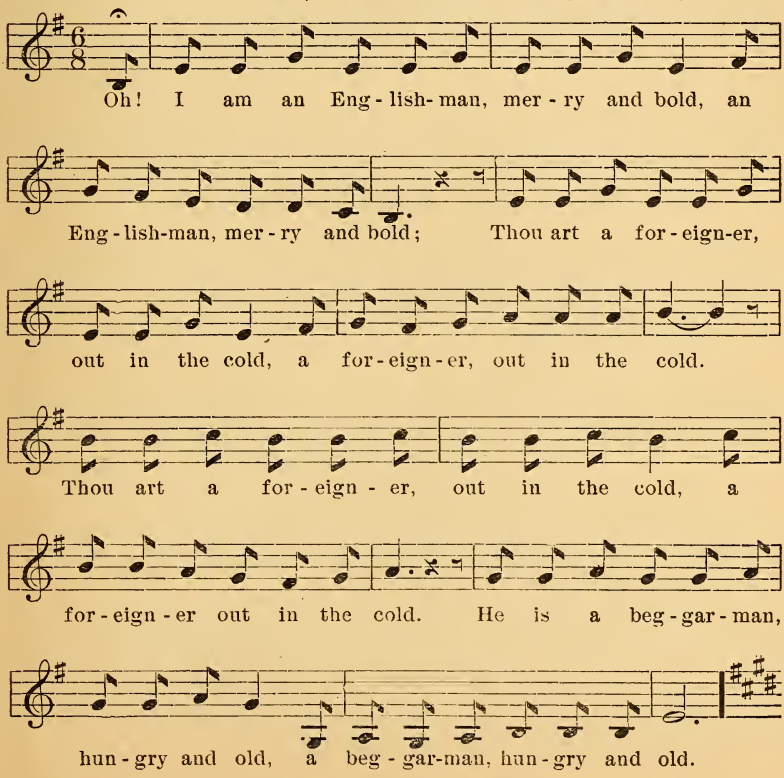
MADAM VERB.—But it can easily be made to rhyme if the other Parts of Speech will help.—(*The following words are then sung to the second motive in "The Criminal Cried" from "The Mikado", Key of G,* as on the next page. *Characters grouped in front of stage.*)

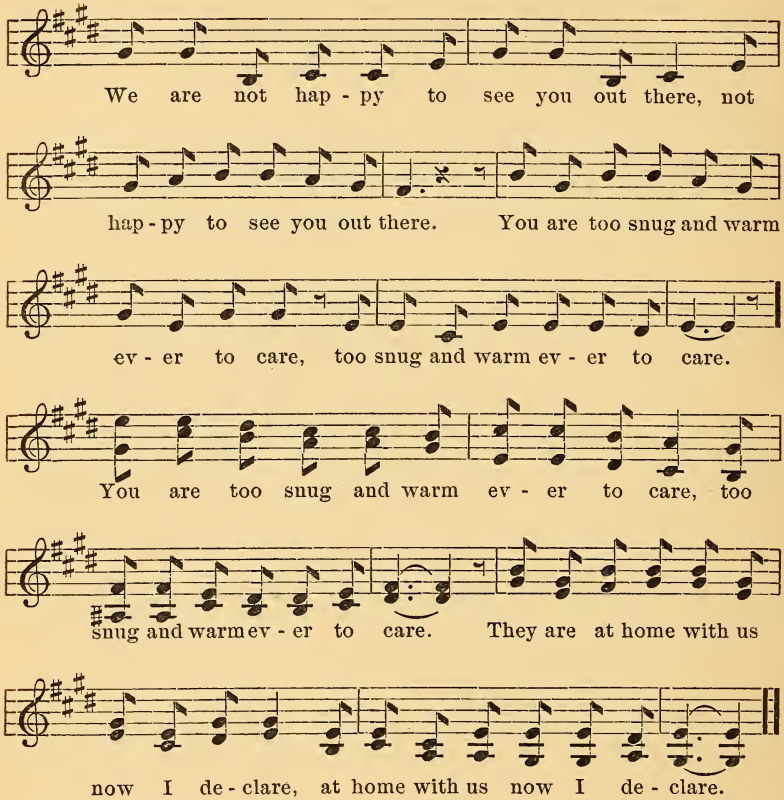
Oh I am an Englishman merry and bold, an Englishman merry and bold.
‖Thou art a foreigner out in the cold, a foreigner out in the cold‖.
He is a beggar man hungry and old ; a beggar man hungry and old.
(*Point to Article as "beggar man".*)

We are not happy to see you out there, not happy to see you out there.
‖ You are too snug and warm ever to care, to snug and warm ever to care. ‖
They are at home with us now, I declare, at home with us now, I declare.

I am an Englishman, Merry and Bold.

Air, "The Criminal Cried," Mikado, ii. 7.





JUDGE GRAMMAR.—That will do—we do not want to hear any more to-day. Your devoted friend Ad Verb is waiting to be heard. Sit down, and let Ad Verb speak.

MADAM VERB.—Devoted friend! I am sure I often wish she would leave me alone. She sticks on to me so tight sometimes that we look like one instead of two, and she is a good weight to carry. Besides she is always teasing me by asking *why* and *when* and *how* everthing is done. Friend indeed!

(*Adverb comes forward, bowing politely, and rubbing her hands together, constantly following and annoying Madam Verb.*)

ADVERB.—*Very* much obliged, indeed; *very* kind of my friend Madam Verb to give way to me! So *very, very* like her!

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—You seem to be fonder of her than she is of you. Pray why do you follow her so closely?

ADVERB.—I like to hear what she says, and to point out to others *how exceedingly well* she speaks.

MADAM VERB.—She is always exaggerating my words. If I say I like anything, Adverb put in "very much", "indeed", or "extremely well", or some such silly words; or if she is in a bad temper, then she flatly contradicts me, and says "no", or "not", or "never". If I say "will", she adds "not"; if I say "can" she makes it "cannot", even sticking her word into mine as if it were part of it. Sometimes she does worse. She actually dares to alter my word after sticking her nose into it, and so she makes *will not* into *won't, cannot,* into *can't, shall not* into *shan't,* and so on. The "wo", and the "ca", and the "sha", are all she has left me, and the "n't" is hers.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Has she always treated you in that way?

MADAM VERB.—As long as I can remember, my lord. That is why, when we were at school together, the girls called her Ad Verb, because she was always adding her words to mine.

ADVERB.—Your lordship must remember that Madam Verb is *rather* out of temper this morning, and is, *perhaps, not quite* just. For *indeed,* it is a fact that I make her words *much more* useful than they *otherwise* could do. Besides, I treat Adjective in much the same way, and she does not complain.

ADJECTIVE.—It is quite true, *it is quite true,* that Adverb has

her word to say about me just as much as about Madam Verb. She is always—

JUDGE GRAMMAR—Well, well. I can't be bothered with any more quarrelling between you two. I want to know to whom belong all these little creatures that are swarming around under foot. (*Recites list of prepositions arranged alphabetically.*) Pray, who is the owner of these mites? Mr. Noun, are they yours?

NOUN.—No indeed, my lord, they are not the *names* of any one or anything that I ever heard of.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Madam Verb, are they yours?

MADAM VERB.—I should not object to having them, my lord, if I could do anything with them, but they seem to me neither *to be*, nor *to do*, nor to *suffer* any—

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—That will do, *that will do*. Miss Adjective, do you claim them?

ADJECTIVE.—They do not qualify anything, my lord; indeed, they seem to me to be *poor*, *useless*, *silly*, *little*—

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—We do not want you to qualify them, thank you, but only to tell us if they are yours. Article, Pronoun, Interjection, Adverb, are they yours?

ADVERB.—I should be *extremely* glad to have them, my lord. I have no doubt I could make them *exceedingly useful*.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Oh, that is not what I asked. Are they yours?

ADVERB.—I cannot say they are *exactly* mine, but—

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—That is all we want to know. (*Very loudly.*) If there is any one in this court to whom these words, *to*, *from*, *of*, *for*, etc., do belong, let him come forward.

PREPOSITION.—They belong to me.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—And who are you ?

PREPOSITION.—Preposition, my lord. My position is just before a noun or pronoun. My words point out to them their proper position. *I* keep them in order.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—*You* keep them in order ? How can a little mite like you keep Mr. Noun in order ?

PREPOSITION.—Little or big, my lord, that's what I do. I settle the position of every one and everything, and show whether they are to be *on* or *under, to* or *from, up* or *down.*

ADVERB.—*Kindly* forgive me for interrupting you. I really must remark that *up* and *down* are my words.

PREPOSITION.—Yes, my lord, but if you say "up a ladder, down a hill", *up* and *down* are mine. They show your position on the ladder or on the hill ; and—(*Enter Conjunction, with a hop, skip, and jump.*)

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—You are late, sir, where have you been ?

CONJUNCTION.—I have been for a little holiday trip in the Grammar-Land. The fact is, my turn was so long in coming, and the last time I was here your lordship broke up the court in such a tem—

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—A what, sir ?

CONJUNCTION.—A-hurry, my lord,—in such a hurry, that I did not think we should meet again for some time, and so I just amused myself on board this palace car at whose terminal station I am so necessary.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—Very improper ! as if you were made to amuse yourself. Such a thing was never heard of before in Grammar-land. Ask Dr. Syntax whether conjunctions are used for amusement.

DR. SYNTAX.—Conjunctions are used to connect words and sentences.

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—There ! You hear what you are used for—to connect words and sentences—that is your work, and that is just what we have been wanting you for. You have kept the whole court waiting while you have been taking a holiday. Your very cap ought to shame your. Pray, what does C. J. stand for ?

CONJUNCTION.—Well my lord, the folks in matter-of-fact land say that it stands for Clapham Junction, which is a big station down there where a great many railways are joined together—or apart, as the case may be. Only they ought to understand that our trains are words and sentences, and my tools with which I joined them are at your service, sir, and if you will allow, sir, I will show you how they work. (*Conjunction wears a belt upon which are strung variously shaped hooks marked "and", "that", "but", "if"*, etc. *Diving in and out among the others he hooks them into place, leaving the space which he is himself to fill. They stand in the following order :—Interjection, Conjunction, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Article, Adjective, Noun, and repeat first consecutively and then in concert* :) Oh ! That we might always attain to the highest ideals !

JUDGE GRAMMAR.—The court is now adjourned.

(*Sergeant Parsing forces his way between the ranks behind which he stood while they recited their motto, and after saluting the Judge he gives the order to march and they all face about and leave the stage.*)

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